



# **The Global Land Rush, Agrarian Change and Social Transformations**

Ward ANSEEUW





## Présentation

---

- The global land rush – some features
  - Project: The LAND matrix (with ILC, OXFAM, CDE, GIGA, GIZ)
- The investment dynamics – new actors, new development models
  - Project: Corporisation of agriculture
- Triggers, enablers and aggravators of the global land rush
  - Project: Commercial pressures on land (with ILC)
- Conclusion: Agrarian change and social transformations



# **The global land rush – Some features**



# Global

2012 announced deals

228.130.787 ha



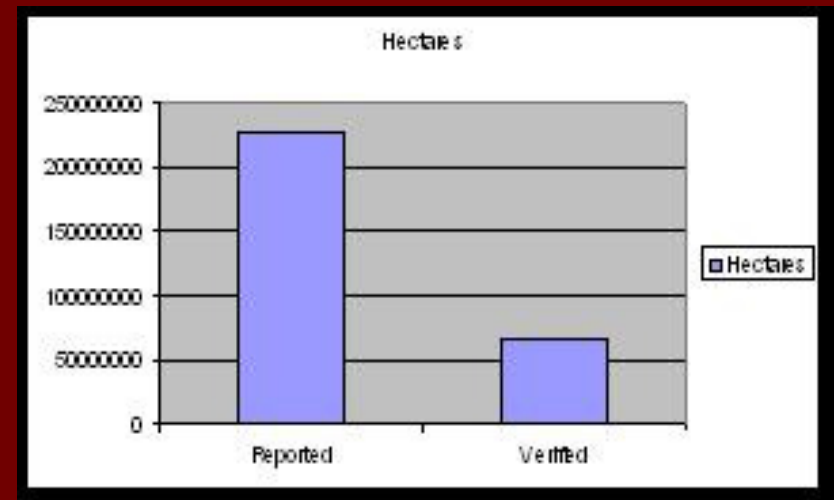
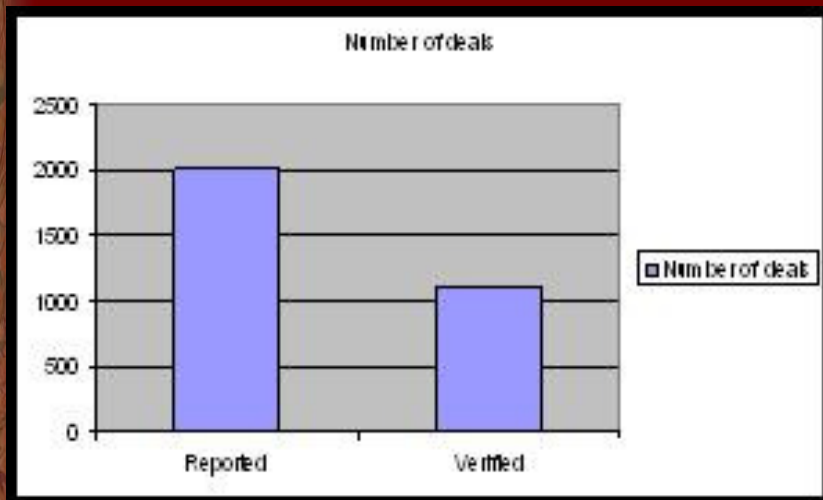
+400-500% compared to WB report

1107 verified deals (55% announced deals)

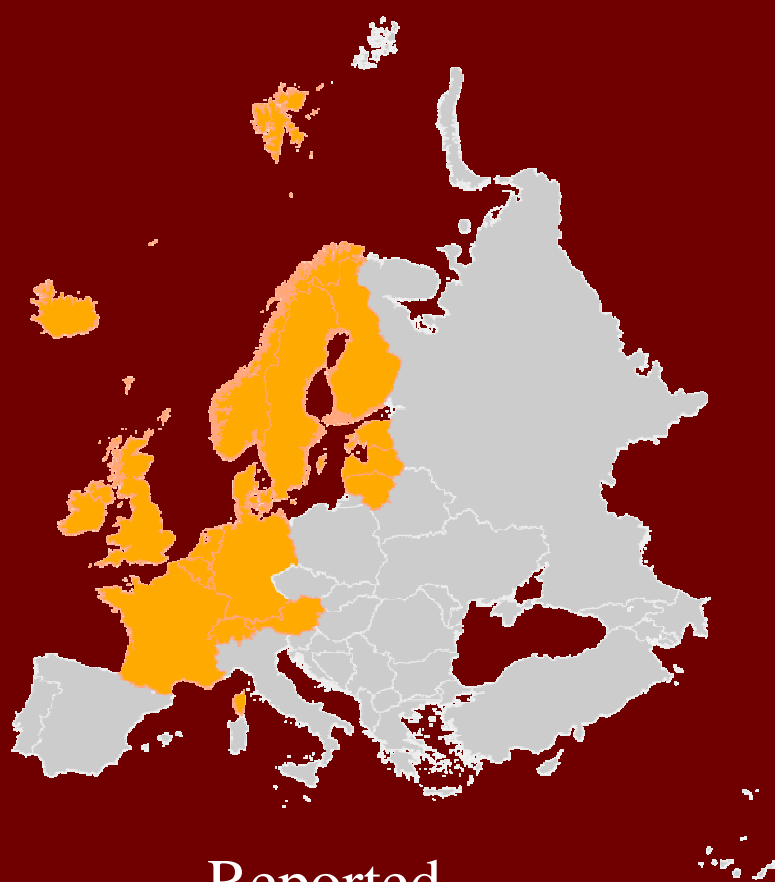
67.042.000 ha (29% announced deals)



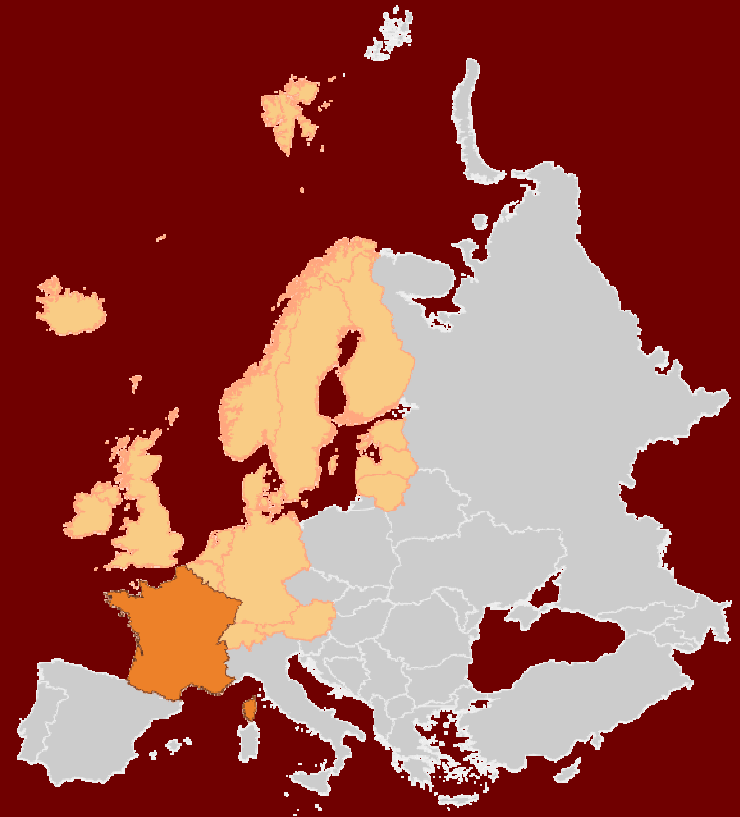
+45% compared to WB report



Global



Reported



Verified

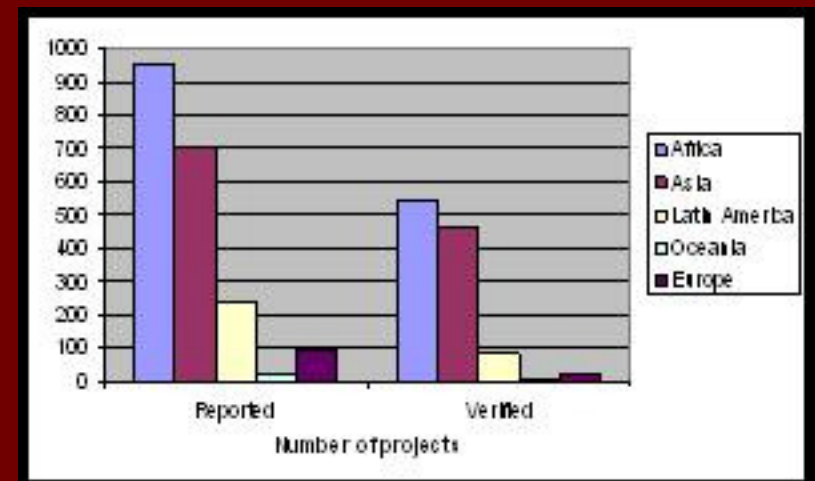
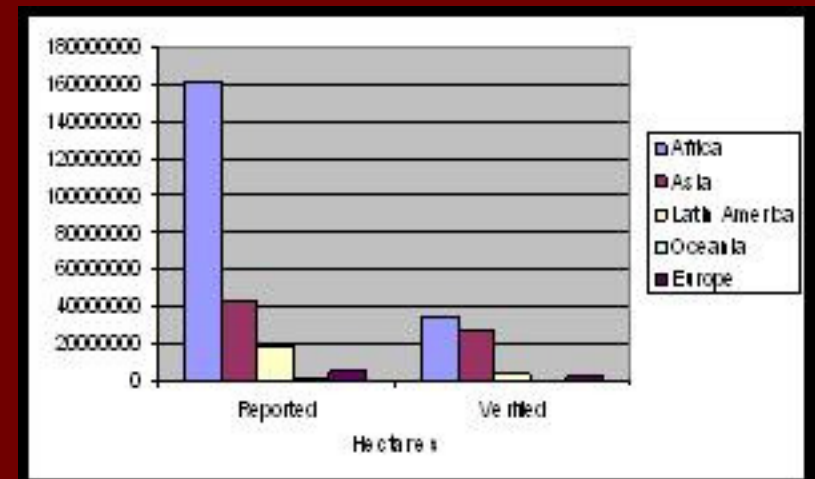
# Africa is the main target

## Announced

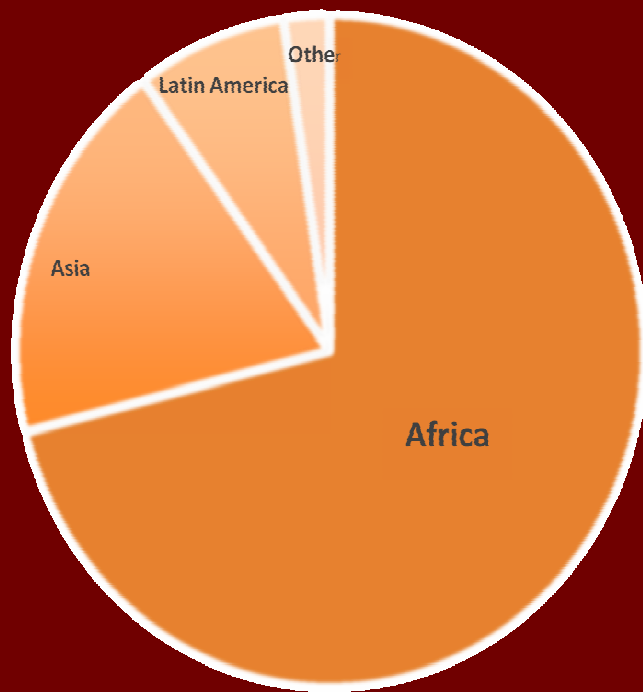
- 161,666,675 ha in Africa (948 projects)
- 42,723,526 ha in Asia (699)
- 17,643,692 in Latin America (240)
- 5,423,632 ha in other regions (112)

## Verified

- 34,195,189 ha in africa (542)
- 27,902,236 ha in Asia (458)
- 3,360,697 ha in Latin america (84)
- 1,583,878 ha in other regions (23)



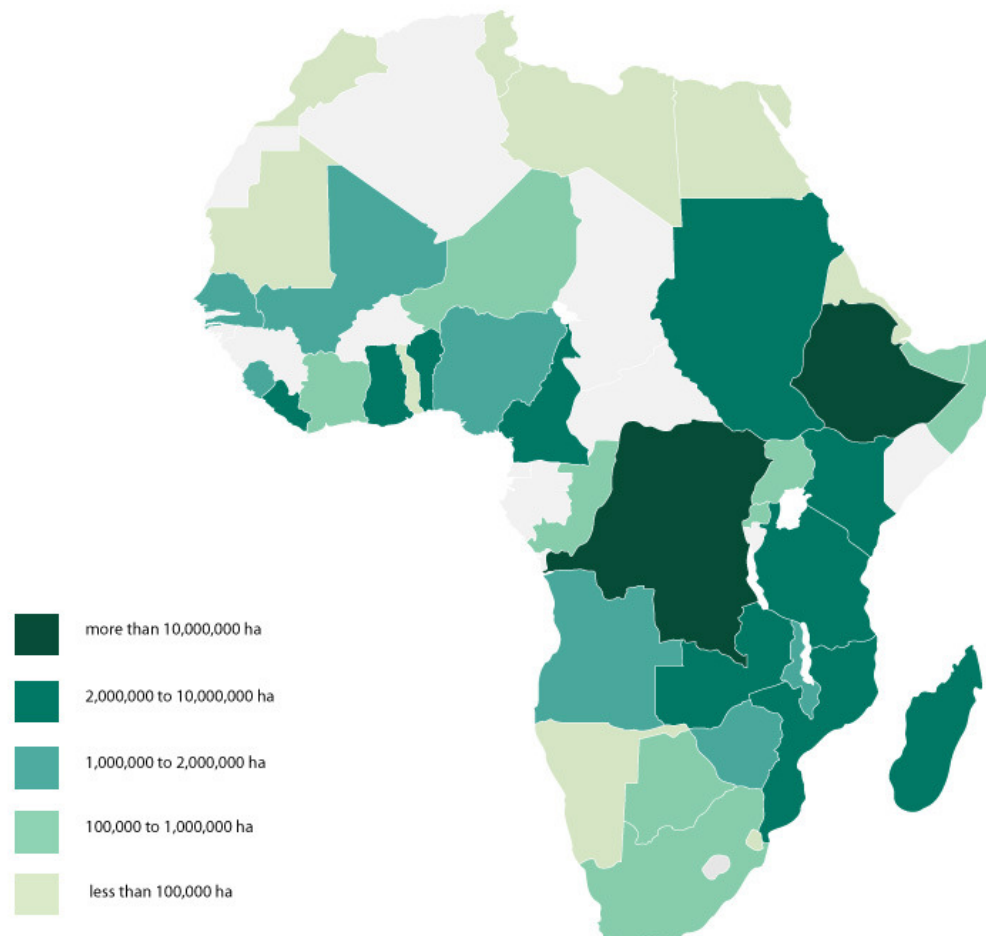
## Africa is the main target



Reported deals



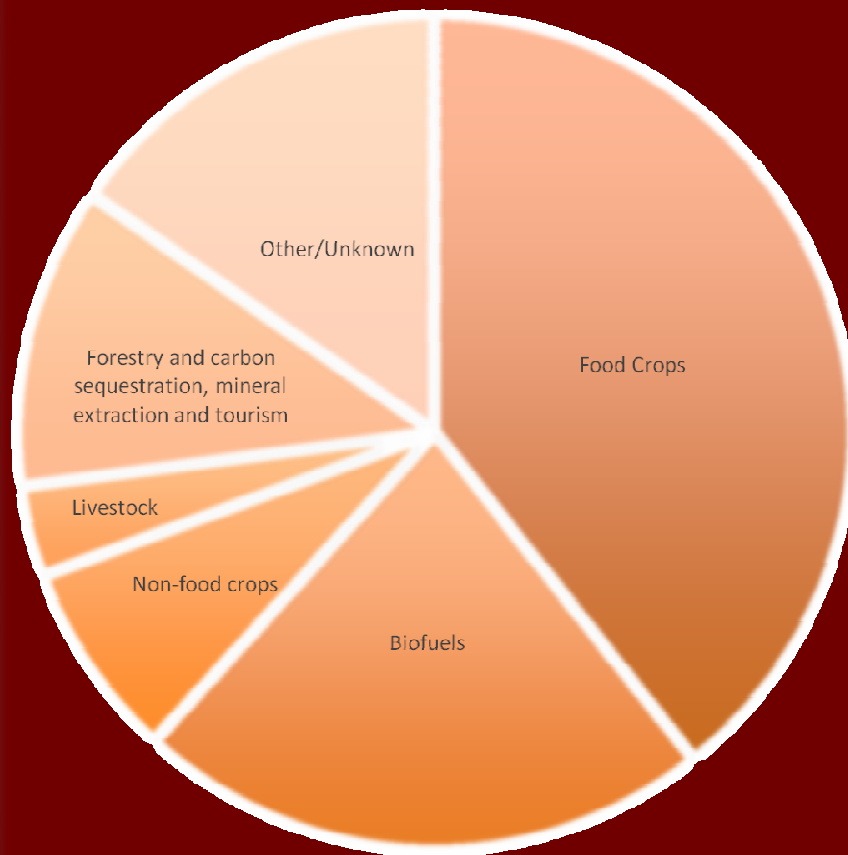
## African countries affected



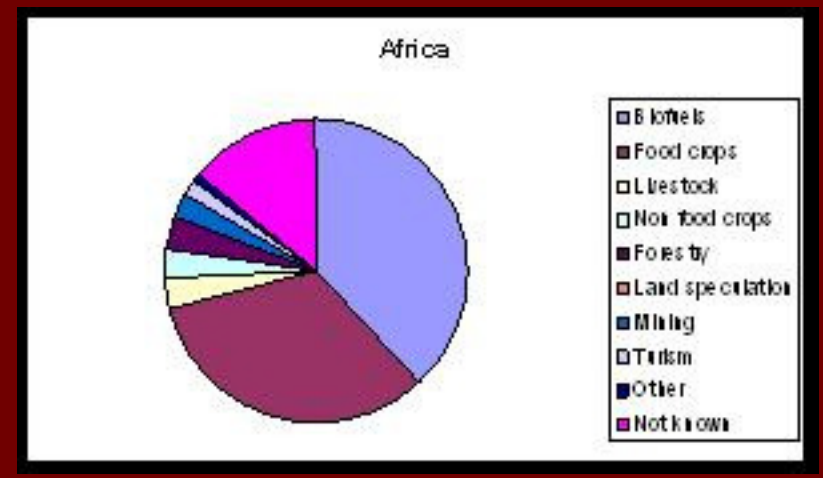
Reported/under negotiations



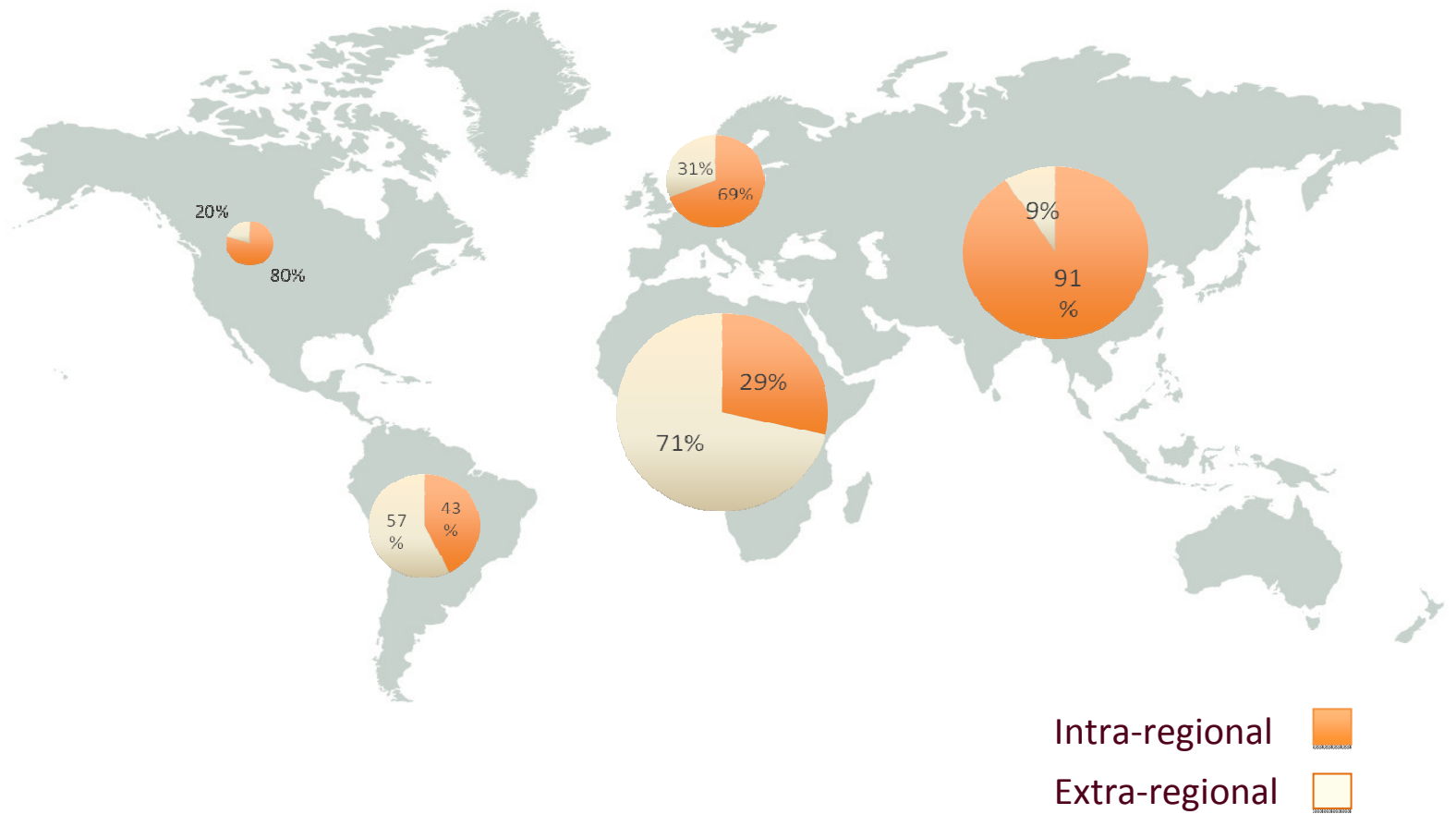
## The sectors invested in



Reported:  
-39% food crops  
-28,5% biofuels



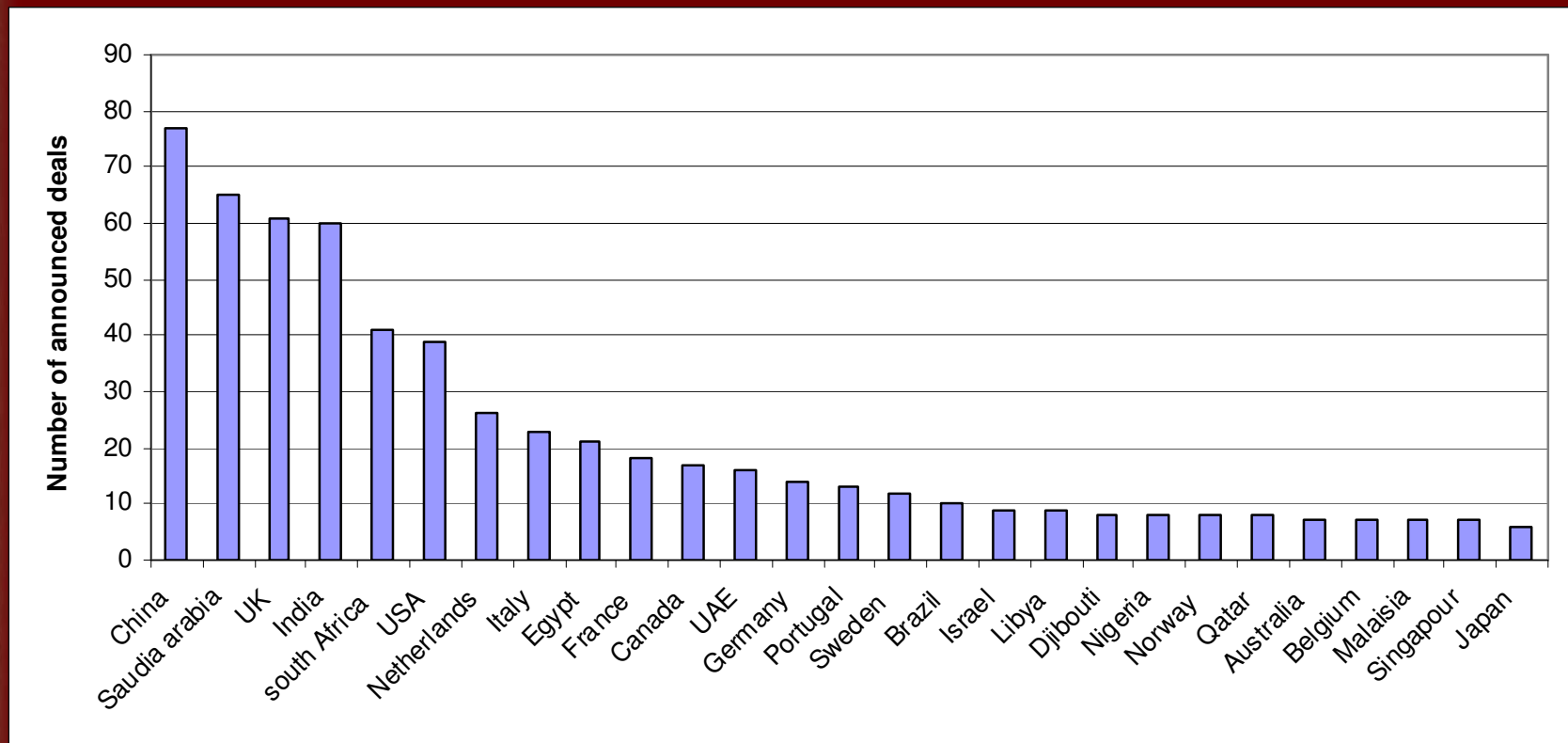
## Origin of investors





## **The investment dynamics – new actors, new investment models**

# Investors



Reported deals in Africa





## Investors

- Traditional Western food-producing, processing, and exporting companies seeking to extend their market share

- Private investors

Capital-rich / food insecure (Gulf States)

- Land and water scarce populous but capital-rich Asian countries.

### Avoiding markets:

- Direct gov. involvement
- Sovereign wealth Funds
- State-owned enterprises

- New actors – Investment funds

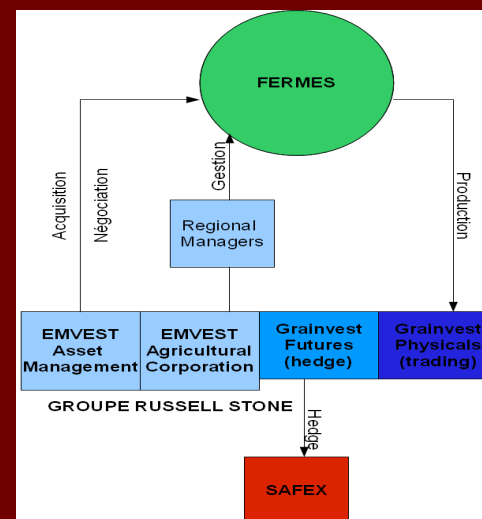
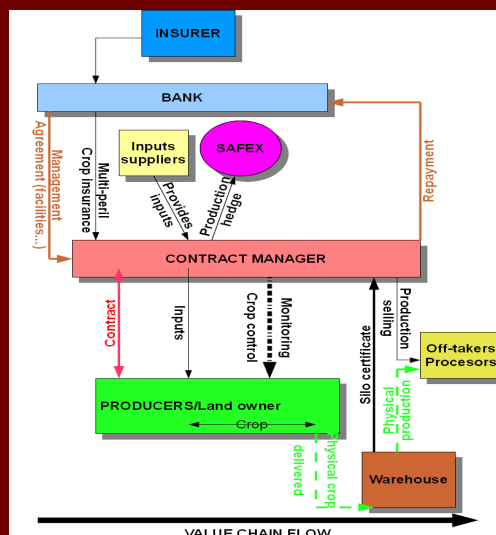
### Speculation:

- Hedge funds
- Pension funds
- Invest banks

-Beyond land, the renewed interest to control land-based activities

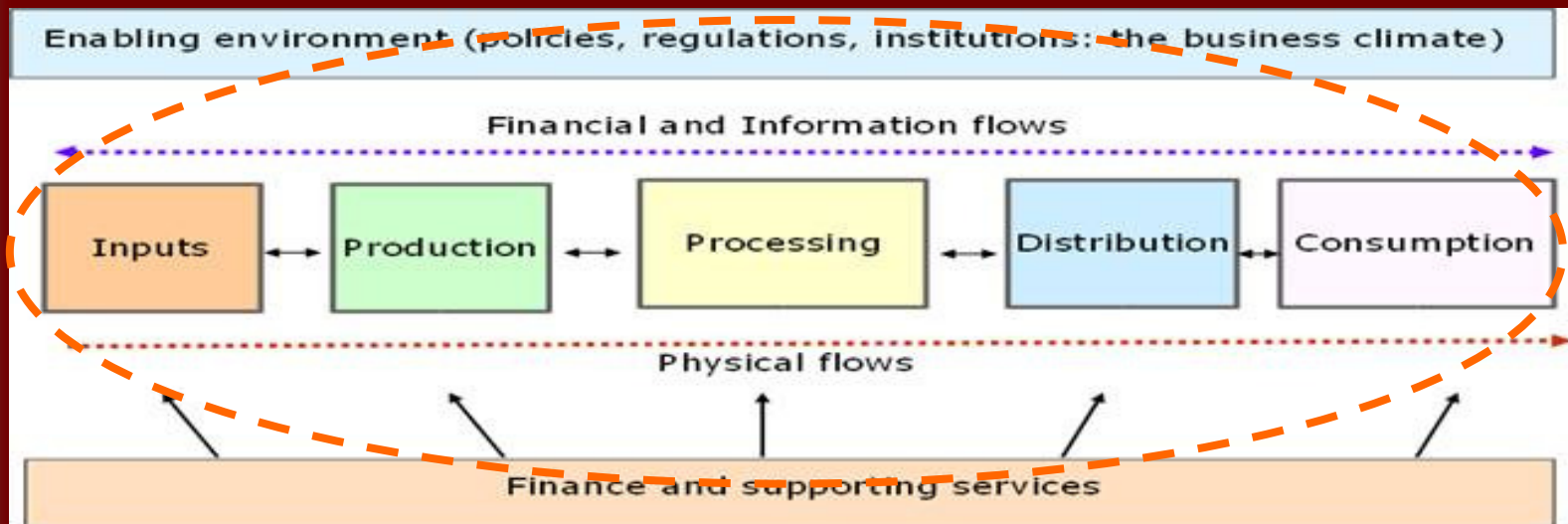
Agricultural  
engineering/  
management companies

Investment/equity funds



# Integration of entire production cycle, including primary production

- Integration of the entire production cycle
  - Integration of primary production / finance in an overall cycle
  - Spreading the risks / no collateral / A reversal of the risk-profit relationship appears within the production chain



New actors / new practices

- MACRO-actors/corporatisation/financiarisation
- Speculation



Agriculture and land not an exception anymore



## **Triggers, enablers and aggravators of the global land rush**



## A complex and inter-dependent environment ...

### Triggers

Food price crisis

### Drivers

Demographic/food &  
energy regimes

Food production  
Biofuels  
Industrial production  
Forest/fibre production  
Ecosystemic  
Services/Tourism  
Speculation

### Facilitators

-Crisis of (the  
perception of) small-  
scale farming  
-Land governance  
-Economic  
governance and  
market regulations  
-Democratic  
governance



A problem of  
governance  
(global and  
host country  
level)



## The crisis of (the perception of) small-scale farming

SSF has not succeeded to assume the role of socio-economic development driver

- Lack of support: i) lack of means in post-ind era, SAP, decrease of DA
- Priorisation of available resources: concentrated on urban centers (electoral and elite interest)

➔ Agriculture – in particular SSF - neglected  
Crisis farm production/productivity

➔ Direct stakes for agriculture

- Land becomes vulnerable to other – more commercial - uses
- Renewal of interest in agriculture leads to private/public land-based investments



## Uneffective land governance

The status of land and of the land rights of populations in host countries (land reform often not implemented)



- Communal land considered as private property of the State

- Vacant or non-utilised land – considered to be non-occupied/non-claimed



- The majority of land acquisitions/dispossessions are legal, with little or no compensations

- The State and national/local elites are main land grabbers



## Demographic governance

---

Incomplete democratisation – enables for decision-making not to consider the affected populations and to facilitate land acquisitions

- Non transparency
- Weak governance systems overall
- Lack of effort to effectively decentralise power
- Non-participatory, non-inclusive policy processes (at different levels)
- Disempowered communities at local level





## Economic governance and market regulations

---

- New phase of capital expansion and capitalist transformation
  - commodification/privatisation of land
  - Profit/rent seeking as facilitators of social transformation – speculation on rights that until recently were 100% secure and recognised as not tradable
- Deregulation/liberalisation of markets - 2600 treaties in 2010, obliging host States to deal with trade/investments issues through international arbitration
  - Reinforcement of international protection for (foreign) investors
  - Incapacity of international initiatives (voluntary)
  - Incapacity of Human rights treaties etc – compulsory to exhaust domestic tribunals first

# Large-scale land acquisitions as aggravator

## Triggers

Food price crisis

## Drivers

Food production  
Biofuels  
Industrial production  
Forest/fibre production  
Ecosystemic  
Services/Turisme  
Speculation

## Facilitators

-Crisis of the  
perception of Small-  
scale farming  
-Lack governance  
-economic  
governance and  
market regulations  
-Democratic  
governance

**LSLA as  
aggravators**





## Large-scale land acquisitions as aggravator

- Deterioration of small-scale farming
  - Loss of land – exclusion of land and agriculture Perte de terres – exclusions agricoles
  - Biased competition
  - Non-insertion of local-national economy
- Deepening weak land governance
  - Land reforms canceled
  - Present, already weak, land rights questioned
- Exacerbated opening up of economy
  - Development land acquisition instruments by host countries
- Entrenching non-democratic governance
  - Increasing non-transparency-corruption
  - Further exacerbating the non implementation of effective decentralisation
  - Non-respect of women and minority rights



# **Agrarian change and social transformations**





## **Agrarian change and social transformations**

---

***More than land loss, food security issue, etc.***



***Profound restructuring of agrarian societies***

***\* Financialiarization and corporization of agriculture***

- New development models brought along by renewed types of actors (Macro-actors - engineering, financial, industrial sectors)
- Generate new productive agricultural models & Redefinition of orthodox frontiers of the agricultural sector
  - Speculation henceforth long-term strategies, led by actors external to the sector, equivalent to other sectors

***\* Concentration and dualisation within the sector***

- Dominion of a few large international groups (Agricultural intermediaries & commercial banks and insurance companies)
- Marginalization of the majority of the (East) African farmers



# Agrarian change and social transformations

---

## \* *Deregulation and foreign powers*

- Economic agents' direct involvement and control over agricultural regulation mechanisms - Private norms developed by very same actors
- Foreign economic powers control an increasing part of the production, emphasizing food sovereignty issues

## \* *Socio-Professional implications of these models*

- Marginalization in the decision making process for the communities and independent family (small scale and large scale) farmers
  - Proletarianisation, farmers 'service provider'
  - Dependence cycle: impossibility to realize productive investment
- The end of the peasant? No family farming anymore? Which future for agricultural sector?



---

Thank you!  
Assanti sana!

Dr Ward ANSEEUW  
CIRAD/University of Pretoria  
[Ward.anseeuw@up.ac.za](mailto:Ward.anseeuw@up.ac.za)

